

“LEGAL LITERACY CAMP: HOW TO FILE AN APPLICATION UNDER THE R.T.I. ACT”

*(Report on the event conducted in
Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh on 4th
June, 2015)*

Abstract: This event was conducted by a para-legal volunteer from Legal Aid Centre, S.L.S.-Noida. Firstly, the participants from a slum-village in Kolkotta were informed about their ‘right to file an application under the Act’; later on, they were taught: ‘how they can file such application’, ‘issues about which such applications can be needful for them’, ‘how an appeal can be filed if they don’t receive information’.

Conducted by:
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I. Concept Note

The Legal Aid Centre at Symbiosis Law School Noida conducted a legal awareness program on “How to file an application under RTI Act, 2005”. Basically the members had to create awareness among the people on how to file an application using the RTI act. As a member/para-legal volunteer I had conducted this program in Visakhapatnam.

The RTI Act 2005 has its origin from a small movement in a rural village of Rajasthan where the farmers pressurized the local authorities to show files which contained their payment details. /this movement got great acclaim and recognition throughout the length and breadth of the country which later developed into legislation. In urban areas majority of them have good knowledge about RTI. They clearly understand the technicalities of the legislation and claim to use it whenever they get an opportunity.

Therefore a simple campaign either online or through posters will suffice in the urban areas.

II. Objectives

The main objective of the LAC of SLS-N was to create awareness and educate people about the RTI Act and how it is an important tool. The urban populace is well versed with its rights and is aware of the means to safeguard their rights.

- To educate the people on the technicalities of the act and the ways to file an application.
- To encourage the people to use RTI whenever required.
- To establish a society where people are aware and protect their rights and bring accountability and transparency within the government.

III. Preliminary Preparations

- Mobilize a small group of volunteers who would help me in conducting the program.
- Printouts of banners, posters and pamphlets.

- Writing the headings in English and the regional language Telugu.
- Reading articles from various websites on the topic at hand to have a considerable amount of information.

IV. Conducting the Event

This program was conducted at Visakhapatnam at Beach road. The walkers consist of people from all walks of life. There were academicians, engineers a couple of doctors a librarian and a department head of law at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam and a professor of law at DSNLU, Visakhapatnam. This walker's association consists of 75 members. They had previous knowledge about RTI. The audience therefore started a debate on whether the RTI act was actually useful or is it a mere legislation on paper. This shows the enthusiasm they had on the topic. I should also thank my cousins who put in great efforts to help me conduct this program. Overall, it was a good experience sharing our knowledge.

V. Response of the Target Population

As stated above, the reaction of the audience was encouraging for us. They even praised the college for its efforts in conducting the program here. In fact the department head of Law at Andhra University, Visakhapatnam enquired about the Director and project head of our college and commended our efforts for conducting such programs.

VI. Future Plan of Action

For conducting such future programs, target audience should be rural people or people who are not aware of their rights like tribals or the uneducated.

VII. Suggestions/Feedback

- Posters and Pamphlets to be printed in English and the regional language Telugu in addition to Hindi.
- Conduct activities which use this awareness program as the base.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

The overall experience was both enlightening and satisfying. The audience commended the social work initiated by the college and heaped praise about our college for instituting a Legal Aid Centre.









List of 'office bearers' of Legal Aid Centre, Symbiosis Law School, Noida

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